THE ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE OF PISA.*

In the early churches the campanile was not employed, as bells were not introduced into Italy till the seventh century. It then long continued to be not an integral part of the design, and was frequently quite detached, as in the example at Pisa. By some, however, it is thought that the foundations in Italy, frequently precarious, prevented its erection, as unequal pressure would perhaps have occasioned disastrous results. The writer in the *Quarterly Review* argues that it originated north of the Alps. The campanile of Pisa is in eight stories, but had originally but seven. The plan is circular, consisting of six peristyles, or stories of circular porticoes, besides the lower and bell stories. It is not improbable that the design, which is of great beauty, was suggested by similar towers in Roman buildings, of which there was one called the Septizonium, at Rome; and the Coliseum itself may have had some influence.† The columns support arches, and have capitals of Corinthian character, but displaying great variety. The arches in the lower story are solid, and the wall is here 13 feet 5 inches thick. The staircase is in the thickness of the wall. The upper story is vaulted over, an opening of hexagonal form being left; above this is the bell story, which according to Norrona, was added by Tommaso, of Pisa, in the middle of the fourteenth century. But the greatest interest attaches to this campanile from its inclination, which is about 12 feet 6 inches from the perpendicular, and though the line of the centre of gravity falls within the base, it could hardly have remained standing, had not the architects taken extraordinary care, by means of metal cramps and good construction, to keep the masonry together. It withstood the shock of the earthquake, which lately did so much injury to some of the buildings at Pisa: The writer of a letter, already quoted from in these pages, says, "The leaning tower survived the shock, and is still firm. I ran to see what had become of it, and great was my surprise at finding it still standing and firm. What an object it must have formed at the moment of the shock. Those who had the opportunity of observing it, assured me that its vibrations were most awful." It not only leans, but is twisted in a curious manner, which it is almost impossible to represent. The architects seem to have attempted after the first failure, to bring it back to the perpendicular, so that the lines seem in no regular direction. An idea has long prevailed, that the architects, Bonano of Pisa, and William of Inspruck, who commenced the building in 1174, intended it as a display of their skill. Such might have been the case in a building like the Garisenda Tower, at Bologna, another remarkable instance, but could hardly have influenced the architects of a beautiful structure like this. The altar of the cathedral, erected in 1774, standing within a short distance of the campanile, sank soon after it was put up, and would seem to prove the nature of the foundation. The campanile has sunk much into the ground, which has had to be excavated round it to show the base. The note-books of travellers record all kinds of impressions, either at looking up at the overhanging mass, or on looking down at the low side from the summit, protected by a single iron rail, where the feet seem to be without support. The steps lean in all directions, and a curious delusion is produced in descending to the open doorway, where the jambs appear perpendicular, and the columns and windows of the cathedral inclined.

Of the different buildings included within the monastery of the middle ages, the quadrangle of cloisters is perhaps the most beautiful and interesting. There, meditation seems to hold her residence, and memory to tell of those, who once paced the long-drawn aisle, but are now beneath the turf which those cloisters inclose. Something of this, we might feel, within the Campo Santo of Italy, that cloistered quadrangle, which took its name from the cemetery of Pisa, the earth of which was brought from the Holy Land.

Towards the end of the 12th century, Archbishop Ubaldo, having been driven from Palestine, brought his vessels home laden with the sacred earth, which he deposited on ground on the north side of the cathedral. The present structure was commenced in 1278, according to the Pisan chronology, which is a year later than the common style, and is said to have been finished in 1283. Giovanni di Pisa was the architect. It forms a quadrangle, resembling the cloisters of a monastery, within which certain families had the right of burial. The walls were decorated with frescoes, and monuments were erected to those whose remains were deposited. Many of these monuments were Roman works, some of them intended for a very different purpose, whilst others represent scenes from the heathen mythology, or subjects strangely at variance with the Christian religion. Subsequently, many remarkable works of art have been collected within the walls, and the building is now one of the most valuable museums in Italy. Externally, it is extremely plain, consisting of a range of pilasters and arches; the mouldings of the latter springing from busts or corbels, immediately above the capitals. It is entered on the side next the cathedral by two plain doorways. In the "Architecture Toscane" a work we have frequently referred to in these pages, the plan is drawn rectangular; but Messrs. Cresy and Taylor represent it slightly varying from that form: we believe the last is correct. Piers, composed of clustered pilasters standing upon pedestals, support semi-circular arches, busts being again inserted at the springing. The pedestals stand upon a step, upon which rises a dwarf wall. But the most curious part of the building consists in the filling in of these arches, which are enriched with mullions and tracery, resembling that of good Gothic examples. It is of the geometrical decorated character, but the mullions, for so we must term them, have bases and capitals, imitated from those of the piers. The Campo Santo formed one of the subjects in the controversy, before mentioned. Mr. Smirke, in the *Archæologia*, vol. xv., having alluded to the building, as indicating the early use of Gothic architecture, Sir H. C. Englefield, Bart., gave arguments to prove that the tracery was later in date. Mr. Smirke re-asserted his opinion that the building had not undergone any alteration, and argued from the tower of the church of Il Frari, at Venice, of which he gave a drawing, but which has since been shewn to be of the date 1361, and not by Niccolo da Pisa, like the body of the church, that it was not unusual to have circular and pointed arches in the same building. He believed that the tracery and window openings in the Pisan building, were of the same date, but that there was no stained glass. The careful examination of Mr. Arthur Taylor, however (*Archæologia*, vol. xx.), placed the matter in a different light. He discovered that, whilst the main portion of the building was from quarries in the neighbourhood of Pisa, the tracery was of Carrara marble. The Gothic portions had certainly been added, for the tracery and the half pillars, or responds, were not connected with the piers, whilst the capitals were unconnected with the adjoining mouldings of the pilaster. The Gothic capitals, also, were more delicately worked, though freely imitated from those of the pilasters. In reference to the date of those additions, he referred to an inscription, recording the erection of certain marble windows in 1464. It had been supposed that Gothic architecture was discontinued at an earlier period, but the date was, at all events, when the use of large panes of stained glass was practised. In the *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii., Mr. Sidney Smirke took up the subject, and endeavoured to show that, there were circumstances of construction, tending to prove the tracery part of the original design. Judging from inscriptions, he thought that, the building being erected by Giovanni da Pisa, in 1283, Antonio Pisano, in 1464, completed the work with four arches, probably doorways, and twenty-eight windows; on which occasion some old materials were used again, therefore that the first architect intended to fill the openings with tracery, and stained glass. As he had discovered a small piece remaining, he considered that there must have been glass, and that this glass was subsequently removed. The tracery corresponded in style and date with English examples, and the design of Sienna Cathedral, attributed to Giovanni, was Gothic, and was executed by his pupils, Agostino and Agnolo, in 1333. Notwithstanding these arguments, which we have been induced to give, because some importance must be attached to them, it seems to be now conceded that the tracery is of late date, and the original intention of glazing with stained glass was afterwards abandoned. The richness of the varied tints has been lost, but in the effect of light and shade, and in the beauty of the materials, it is thought that few buildings can surpass the Campo Santo of Pisa. Several volumes might be filled with illustrations of the fine collection of works of art, which the building contains. Heathen tombs were collected, and used as Christian monuments, and works of art of all kinds have been deposited from every part of the Pisan territory. The late *conservatore*, Lasinio, still further increased this collection, and through his exertions, which the government do not seem to imitate, many beautiful works of art were preserved, particularly during the French invasion, which left its traces in so many of the buildings of Italy. Several capitals from the cathedral and campanile are here deposited; they were removed during the repairs of those buildings. In England, such fragments are carted away by the dealer in old materials, or become the perquisites of the workmen, an instance of which amongst a hundred others, occurred at the restoration of the Temple Church. Had there been a few square yards of ground and a shed, anywhere, to receive such fragments, a valuable collection might ere this have been formed, of objects, now irrecoverable, and the arts would have reaped a great benefit.* The ambulatory of the Campo Santo is paved with tomb stones, having figures upon them in low relief, and the costumes of the different classes of citizens being represented, the collection is one of high interest. The walls are covered with subjects in fresco, which have of late excited some interest in England; they consist of subjects from the Holy Scriptures, and the lives of the saints; the earliest were by Giotto. Connected with the ambulatory are one or two small chapels, which do not require further notice. The churches of Pisa are almost important examples in the history of Italian architecture, and it is curious to observe the influence of the type of the cathedral, of which we meet with so many examples in England. Thus, the very curious church of San Paolo a ripa d'Arno is a copy of the cathedral, on a reduced scale. It has three ranges of arches, similar to those of the cathedral, and by many it has been supposed, that the latter building was taken from *it*. There is much obscurity about its date: that generally ascribed to it is 1100.—Sta. Maria della Spina, of which Mr. Knight has given a good illustration, stands on the banks of the Arno, and received its name from its possessing, as was said, a spine from the Saviour's crown of thorns. It was originally an oratory at the foot of a bridge. Its plan is a simple oblong, with an extension at the east, as a chancel. This portion is probably a later addition, and upon it are three spires. It is believed that the building was commenced in 1230, Giovanni da Pisa being the architect. The side next the river, and other parts are in their original state, but great alterations were commenced in 1323, in which the building gained its present appearance, which is that of a beautiful shrine crowned with pinnacles and tabernacles, with ranges of beautiful statues, said to be the work of Giovanni da Pisa and his pupils. Giovanni is said to have had the work of the Campo Santo given to him in consequence of his success—an instance of the identity of the pursuits of architect and sculptor, during the middle ages. The principal front has three gables curiously arranged. The lower story has round arches, inclosing work of a Gothic character; and above are wheel windows with the pinnacles and sculpture. It was in progress during great part of the 14th century, and, when completed, was considered a miracle of art. The upper portion is all Gothic, of white marble, and most delicate workmanship; and if the sculpture appears somewhat profusely used, we must recollect the peculiar ability and taste of the Italians for this species of embellishment.

DRUIDICAL TEMPLES.—The Rev. E. Dukes, F.S.A., has published a volume to elucidate the temples of Abury and Stoneheoge.

* See p. 409, *ante*.

† "Murray's" "Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy."

* On this subject, the papers "On the Preservation of National Antiquities," in Vol. III., may be referred to.

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